

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Board of Trustees

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS

GENERAL HOSPITAL,

FOR THE YEAR

1838.



BOSTON:

PRESS OF JAMES LORING.

1839.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL
HOSPITAL, PRESENTED TO THE CORPORATION AT
THEIR ANNUAL MEETING, JANUARY 23, 1839.

THE Committee of the Trustees of the General Hospital, appointed to examine the accounts of the Treasurer, and to prepare the statement of the condition of the Institution, annually laid before the Corporation, respectfully report :—

That they have examined the accounts of the Treasurer and the certificates of property in his possession belonging to the Institution, all of which they find to be correct.

The Committee regret to state, that owing to the ill state of health of the Superintendent of the Hospital, Dr. Bradford, the Trustees have found it expedient to grant him leave of absence for a few months, in the hope that a more congenial climate, and the relief from arduous cares, may restore him with renewed strength to a career of usefulness. In the meantime, his duties have been satisfactorily performed by Dr. Benjamin F. Parker, late a resident physician of the house.

The past year has been one of very considerable anxiety to the Trustees, in consequence of the embarrassed state of their finances, and the diminution of their receipts consequent upon the unexampled difficulties of the times, which have seriously affected a portion of the property in which their funds have been invested.

It will be perceived, on reference to the Treasurer's accounts, that the receipts of the General Hospital for the past year are as follows, viz.:—

Annual subscription for free beds,	\$1,300
Dividends on stocks,	\$2,141
Rents—store in Washington street,	900
	— 3,041
Sale of four shares of new stock in the Merrimack Manufacturing Company,	4,240
The bequest of S. Courtis, compromised,	2,500
	— 6,740
Dividend from Mass. General Hospital, to be received,	5,000
	— \$16,081

The Expenditures per Treasurer's Accounts.

Completion of the Belknap Ward—west wing of the Asylum,	\$1,284 45
Salaries of officers of Mc Lean Asylum,	4,300
Expenses of General Hospital,	9,680 28
Salaries of officers of do.	850
Interest on loans,	1,200
Incidental expenses—taxes, printing, tolls, &c.	191 51
	— \$17,506 24
Excess of expenditures over receipts,	\$1,425 24.

The four shares of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company sold as above, might, with propriety, and the \$2,500 received from the will of S. Courtis, should be considered as capital, all of which it has been necessary to expend to meet the current expenses of the year, which otherwise must have exceeded the receipts more than \$8,000. There is due to the Life Insurance Company \$50,000, of which debt, \$40,000 has been incurred to build the

Belknap Ward of the Mc Lean Asylum—an erection absolutely necessary to meet the increased demand for the accommodation of female patients. This money, it is believed, has been expended with judgment and economy, and it is very certain that the building is admirably calculated for the purposes for which it was intended.

It will be very obvious in examining the annexed report of the Superintendant of the Hospital, in what way these difficulties have been experienced, and to what extent its usefulness has been diminished in consequence of the decrease of receipts. The painful alternative was early offered to the Trustees, either of increasing the debt of the Institution, or of curtailing its sphere of usefulness. The Trustees prudently adopted the latter, and of the fifteen free beds which had been supported by the funds of the Institution, in addition to those maintained by benevolent individuals, they were obliged to cut off ten, and reserving two for cases of accidents, for which it was absolutely necessary that provision should be made. On examination of the return of the Assistant Physician, it appears that the whole number of applications for admission into the Hospital has been . . . 576
 Rejected in consequence of want of free beds, . . . 104
 Cases unfit for various reasons to be admitted, . . . 92—196
 Whole number of cases treated at the Hospital, . . . 380

It will be seen in reference to the report of the Superintendent that the average time which free patients remain is $5\frac{7}{8}$ weeks. The ten beds would have afforded accommodation for 520 weeks, which, at an average occupation of $5\frac{7}{8}$ weeks to each patient, 90 individuals have been deprived of the advantages of the Institution who would otherwise have been admitted. Notwithstanding the diminished means of usefulness, the number of surgical operations performed in the Hospital has increased the past year. The visit of Dr. Warren to Europe afforded a favourable opportunity of procuring the best and latest improvements in surgical instruments, which the Trustees have availed themselves of, at considerable expense, to the requisite extent. The Massachusetts General Hospital has always aimed to adopt and introduce the most

recent improvements and discoveries in medicine and surgery. The apparatus provided for the cure and comfort of the sick is not inferior to that in the best Hospitals in Europe; compared with most of them it is superior—advances in medical practice are made there which* react upon the whole community, and which could not be accomplished in private practice.

The west wing of the Mc Lean Asylum, at Charlestown, called the Belknap Ward, having been completed and finished the past year, that Institution is now in a situation which cannot fail to be most gratifying to the Corporation and to the public. This is the more satisfactory, because every dollar granted to this department can hereafter be applied to the support and recovery of the Insane. Heretofore it has been found necessary to expend large amounts in the requisite preparations; these are now completed, and are adequate to doing full justice to one hundred and fifty patients. In addition to the Belknap Ward above referred to, twelve new rooms have been finished in the male department.

The importance and advantage of the increased accommodations may be best seen by comparing the number of admissions the past year with those of the two previous.

The whole number admitted into the Asylum in 1836 was 183

do.	do.	do.	1837 “	191
do.	do.	do.	1838 “	224

being an increase of 33 over 1837, and 41 over 1836. And there is every prospect that the increase in the population and the high reputation of the Institution will render its means of usefulness still more extensive.

Your Committee beg leave to refer to the annexed annual report of the Superintendent of the Mc Lean Asylum, for a table of admissions and discharges during the year. The number of recoveries under the mild system adopted, particularly of recent cases, is most satisfactory. It appears that of the *recent cases* of insanity excluding deaths and patients prematurely removed, *the whole have recovered*.

* Between 80 and 90 Medical Students visit the Hospital twice a week during the Medical Lectures.

This remarkable result goes far to corroborate the opinion now so generally entertained, that insanity is a physical and not a purely mental disease—that it is traceable to some cause—that it is hereditary or that it owes its origin to a derangement of the organization of the body, operating upon that most delicate organ the brain, and capable of being cured by skilful treatment like any other disease, and not an inscrutable visitation of God, which the skill of man may in vain attempt to remove or avert. It demonstrates the importance, as in other diseases, of early treatment, and the danger of delay either in the hope of cure, if left to the operation of nature, or through the desire of concealment from the fear of disgrace, falsely attached to a complaint of this nature. But above all does it appeal strongly to a benevolent and enlightened public, that the means of treatment might be placed within the reach of all who require it. To omit to provide the means of recovery to those visited by this greatest of afflictions, is denying the physician to the sick, and medicine to those who most need it.

The premature removal of patients for want of means, has always been a cause of deep regret to the Trustees. The Committee cannot avoid making an extract from a letter from the Superintendent, enclosing his reports, in relation to this subject. “As I wish,” he says, “to illustrate how much more good could have been effected, had there been even a limited fund for the purpose of continuing, in particular cases, the term a few weeks or months longer, after the means of the friends of the insane person have been exhausted, I will recapitulate the results of two years experience during which the Asylum has been under my charge. In 1837, 72 patients recovered, 10 dismissed as much improved, and 4 as improved; nearly all these last fourteen were not sufficiently long under the treatment of the Asylum to have the results as regards recovery determined. In 1838, 74 recovered, and 21 others were necessarily removed, and always from pecuniary considerations after an insufficient trial. There are beyond a doubt, in this list of 35 individuals, at least 20 to 25 who would have recovered, could the length of their stay have been increased on an average three months! At our lowest rate of board, this number

of persons in completing their restoration to health, to society, and to themselves, would require an expenditure of 700 to 1000 dollars only, and in the rapidly augmented number of cases annually admitted, there is no reasonable expectation that this unhappy class of patients thus prematurely dismissed will be less hereafter."

Here again the Trustees have to regret their want of means to carry out the great purposes of usefulness which the Institution was intended to accomplish—thus for the want of a few hundred dollars, 20 to 25 individuals are deprived of the means of complete restoration from a malady, the greatest with which humanity can be afflicted. The Committee would refer to two interesting tables furnished by the Superintendent, one of the occupations of the male patients since the establishment of the Asylum in 1818, and the other of the residences of all the patients during the same period. The former shows the occupations of the male patients only, the females not being capable of classification for obvious reasons. This table demonstrates how extensively the various ranks of society have been benefited by the Institution, hardly a profession, or an occupation which does not find here some representative. And it is not a little remarkable that the occupation which of all others has been deemed most healthful, and which from the absence of all causes of excitement could be less than any other, exposed to insanity—that of the farmer, furnishes the greatest number of patients for the Asylum, being nearly 30 per cent. of the whole number of males admitted.

The table of the residences of the whole number of patients, shows how largely this Commonwealth has availed itself of the advantages of the Institution—more than three quarters having been residents of this State. It will be seen on reference to the return of the steward, that the receipts of the Mc Lean Asylum have nearly equalled the expenses of the establishment, including the salaries of the officers, the deficiency being only about \$1100. It is to be hoped that the next year the Asylum for the insane will support itself. The reduced state of their income has decided the Trustees to dispense with the services of the Assistant Physician to the Asylum, and to substitute a House Apothecary.

Your Committee are aware, that there is an impression abroad that the funds of the Massachusetts General Hospital, are ample for all the purposes for which they are required. This opinion as will be seen by the foregoing statement is erroneous. Munificent donations were bestowed upon the Institution in the early stages of its establishment, and more recently in its progress to its present situation. But it should be recollected, not only that sites were to be obtained and buildings were to be erected, commensurate with the wants of the present generation, but a substantial foundation was to be laid for the increasing wants of posterity, and for these purposes it is obvious that heavy expenditures must be required.

That these expenditures have been made with judicious economy, no one who has the opportunity of examination can doubt. And if the measure of usefulness is any criterion by which to judge of the propriety of expenditures, we cannot fail to award to those who in times past have directed the affairs of this Institution, the meed of just approbation.

The Massachusetts General Hospital having been thus placed in a position to be eminently useful and highly creditable to the community in which it is placed, it remains to be seen if the public will sustain it.

M. BRIMMER,
HENRY EDWARDS.

Occupations of male patients admitted to the Mc Lean Asylum, during a period of 20 years from the opening of the Institution in October, 1818.

Farmers,	184	Bookbinders, . . .	2
Merchants,	132	Watchmakers, . . .	5
Mariners,	69	Bakers,	5
Carpenters,	53	Tinplateworkers, . .	4
Clerks,	46	Glassblowers, . . .	3
Students,	42	Masons,	3
Shoemakers,	44	Truckmen,	4
No occupation, . . .	30	Tanners,	4
Laborers,	26	Butchers,	4
Blacksmiths,	22	Stablers,	2
Physicians,	25	Barbers,	2
Teachers,	19	Plumbers,	2
Printers,	16	Engravers,	3
Taverners,	16	Tailors,	3
Lawyers,	16	Dancingmasters, . .	2
Boys,	17	Stevedores,	2
Dyers, Clothiers, &c.	12	Officers of United States'	
Wheelwrights, . . .	10	Navy and Army, . .	4
Painters,	10	Distillers,	2
Cabinetmakers, . . .	9	Engineer,	1
Machinists,	8	Upholsterers, . . .	2
Clergymen,	10	Papermaker,	1
Manufacturers, . . .	8	Stagedriver,	1
Sailmakers,	8	Miller,	1
Sadlers,	8	Hatter,	1
Coopers,	8	Rigger,	1
Stonecutters,	6		918

The following table of the residences of the patients, will show how great a proportion of the advantages of the Institution have accrued to the inhabitants of this Commonwealth.

Massachusetts,		New Brunswick, . .	15
Boston,	458	Vermont,	10
Other towns, . .	774	New York,	9
New Hampshire, . .	118	South Carolina, . .	2
Maine,	120	Ohio,	1
Rhode Island, . . .	42	Canada,	2
Connecticut,	7	Alabama,	1
Virginia,	1	Maryland,	1
Europe,	5	District of Columbia,	2
West Indies,	2		1570

REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE HOSPITAL IN ALLEN STREET,
BOSTON, FOR THE YEAR 1838.

*Admitted at the Massachusetts General Hospital, from January 1,
1838, to January 1, 1839.*

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Patients paying board,	153	52	205
do. do. part of time,	24	18	42
do. entirely free,	48	85	133
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	225	155	380

Discharged during the same period.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Well,	107	67	174
Much relieved,	38	28	66
Relieved,	32	23	55
Not relieved,	20	28	48
Died,	23	12	35
Eloped,	3	0	3
Unfit,	3	0	3
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	226	158	384

Proportion of deaths to whole number of results—1 in 11.

	Private Rooms.	Ward paying.	Free.	In the whole house.
Greatest N ^o . of patients at any one visit,	6	26	32	53
Least do. do. do.	0	10	16	35
Average population,	2.9	16.84	23.46	43.2
do. foreign population,				15.1
Proportion of Ward beds occupied by free patients, nearly $\frac{5}{8}$.				
Average time of stay of Ward-paying patients, about $3\frac{4}{5}$ weeks.				
do. do. free		do.	about $5\frac{7}{8}$ weeks.	

Analysis of Patients.

	Free.	Paying.
Males.....Sailors,	1	21
Mechanics,	10	49
Teamsters, Drivers, &c.	4	5
Farmers,	1	12
Clerks, Traders, &c.	3	13
Laborers,	25	28
Minors,	2	14
Domestics,	2	9
Gardeners,	1	3
Clergymen,	0	2
Physicians,	0	2
Other occupations,	2	16
Of these, there were in private rooms,	0	18
Females....Domestics,	50	29
Wives,	11	10
Seamstresses, &c.	12	7
Minors,	11	8
Spinsters,	1	4
Other occupations,	4	8
Of these, there were in private rooms,	0	9

Of the free patients, more than one third were female domestics, and rather more than one sixth laborers, of whom one half were Irish.

Annual Expenses for 1838.

Stores,	5,412 72	
Wages,	3,612 71	
Fuel,	1,393 49	
Furniture,	1,016 98	
Medicine,	822 60	
Repairs,	786 56	
Stationary,	82 52	
Grounds,	12 00	
	<hr/>	
	\$13,139 58	
Deduct Contingent Cr.	43 04	
	<hr/>	\$13,096 54

The amount charged for board during the year was—

To paying patients,	3,592 09
To Treasurer, for free patients' board,	3,635 18
	<hr/>
	\$7,227 27

If from the amount of annual expense	13,096 54
we deduct the charges for repairs and improvements,	1,011 32
	<hr/>
and the balance,	\$12,085 22
be divided by 52, giving	232 41
and this quotient by the average population, 43.2,	
there results for the weekly expense of a patient,	\$5 38

BENJAMIN F. PARKER, for

G. BRADFORD, *Superintendent.*

To the Board of Trustees.

TWENTY-FIRST

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE
PHYSICIAN AND SUPERINTENDENT OF THE Mc LEAN
ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE.

It is again the grateful privilege of the Physician and Superintendent of the Asylum, to report to the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, in conformity to the regulations, that another year of unmixed prosperity has passed over this department of the institution under their care.

In the much increased extent of operations of the Asylum, in the success of its curative results as contrasted with former years, or with other similar institutions, in its exemption from those painful incidents against which all human vigilance will not always defend, in the comfort and security of its custodial means as respects the hopeless and the relief of friends, and lastly, in its financial arrangements and results, it is confidently hoped that it has not fallen short in its high duties and responsibilities to the public.

The whole number of patients remaining in the house at the commencement of the year, was	Males. 49	Females. 37	Total. 86
There have been received during the year,	79	59	138
Total enjoying the benefits of the Asylum, 128	<hr/> 128	<hr/> 96	<hr/> 224

During the year have been discharged,

	Total.	Males.	Females.	Old cases.	Recent cases, i. e. of under 1 year before admission.
Recovered,	74	46	28	16	58
Much improved,	2	2	0	2	0
Improved,	7	4	3	7	0
Not improved,	13	5	8	13	0
Died,	12	6	6	6	6
Eloped,	0	0	0	0	0
Unfit,	2	1	1	0	0
After insufficient trial,	21	6	15	11	10
Total discharged,	131	70	61	55	74
Remaining Jan. 1, 1839,		58	35	Total	93

The following is the proportion of recoveries :

Of all recent cases discharged,	. . .	78 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.
Of all old cases,	. . .	28 “
Of all cases, recent and old,	. . .	56 “
Of recent cases, exclusive of those who have died, or have been prematurely removed,		100 “
Of old cases, exclusive, &c.	. . .	40 “
Of all cases, exclusive, &c.	. . .	75 $\frac{1}{2}$ “

Of the class reported as having had an insufficient trial, 10 were much improved, 7 were improved, and 4 were not improved at the date of their discharge. It is confidently believed that almost all of these would have been restored, had it been in the power of friends to have given them an adequate trial.

I do not propose at this time to go into as full a detail of the condition and results of the institution, as has of late been customary, and for the following reasons. During every month, frequent applications are made at the Asylum for information respecting its facilities for receiving and treating patients, its mode of management and results, from individuals who are desirous of subjecting their friends to its aids and care, and most of whom have never had their attention called to the subject of the provision for the insane, and whose ideas as to the means pursued, the probable event in

various cases, as well as their own duty in the premises, are generally crude, prejudiced and erroneous. It is then of great convenience to the direction of the institution, as well as of advantage to the applicants for its aids, that all the requisite information by which friends of patients would be able to govern themselves understandingly and judiciously, should be communicated freely : disappointment and dissatisfaction being rarely experienced except by those who are ignorant of what an Asylum may be justly expected to accomplish.

There is another class in the community, anxiously seeking information in regard to the detail of these institutions for the insane, with a view to intelligent action in the establishment of similar charities elsewhere, and whose attention is perhaps particularly directed to this as the oldest, the most liberally provided, and probably the most complete of any in the country, whose inquiries deserve to be gratified.

Hitherto the imperfect details of the various annual reports, the rules and regulations, the forms of admission, &c. have been distributed to inquirers, as affording a portion, though incomplete, of the desired information. As most of these are out of print, it has been thought advisable, as convenient to ourselves and the public, to prepare a full and detailed account of the Asylum, its facilities and results. As regards the latter, the expiration with the year just closed, of twenty entire years since the institution went into operation, seems to fix a suitable point at which the various statistical facts should be aggregated.

In pursuance of this plan, it is designed to present hereafter, a supplementary report.

LUTHER V. BELL,

Physician and Superintendent.

Mc Lean Asylum,

Jan. 1, 1839.

REPORT

OF THE

STEWARD OF THE Mc LEAN ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE,
FOR THE YEAR 1838.

THE following sums are the balances of the several accounts at this Institution for the year 1838.

Stores,	.	.	.	.	.	.	\$8,644 97
Wages,	.	.	.	.	.	.	3,391 94
Medicine,	.	.	.	.	.	.	376 18
Fuel,	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,580 01
Contingencies,	.	.	.	.	.	.	519 71
Furniture,	.	.	.	.	.	.	936 49
Belknap Ward,	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,024 31
Boxes,	.	.	.	.	.	.	70 09
Repairs,	.	.	.	.	.	.	502 59
Improvements,	.	.	.	.	.	.	545 74
Diversions,	.	.	.	.	.	.	849 00
Stationary,	.	.	.	.	.	.	65 77
Library,	.	.	.	.	.	.	37 30
Abatement,	.	.	.	.	.	.	61 82
New Building,	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,490 79
							<hr/>
							\$20,096 71

Deduct credit of Farm, &c.	.	1,696 45	
“ excess of stores on hand			
over last year,	.	515 09	2,211 54
			<hr/>
Year's expenditure (exclusive of salaries,)			\$17,885 17

COLUMBUS TYLER, *Steward.*

Mc Lean Asylum, Jan. 9, 1839.

OFFICERS OF THE INSTITUTION.

1839.

EDWARD TUCKERMAN, *President.*

JONATHAN PHILLIPS, *Vice-President.*

HENRY ANDREWS, *Treasurer.*

WILLIAM GRAY, *Secretary.*

TRUSTEES.

CHARLES AMORY,
WILLIAM APPLETON,
GEORGE BOND,
NATHANIEL I. BOWDITCH,
MARTIN BRIMMER,
GEORGE M. DEXTER,

HENRY EDWARDS,
ROBERT HOOPER, JR.,
THOMAS LAMB,
FRANCIS C. LOWELL,
HENRY B. ROGERS,
ROBERT G. SHAW.

Consulting Physicians.

JAMES JACKSON, M. D. JOHN RANDALL, M. D. GEORGE C.
SHATTUCK, M. D. JOHN HOMANS, M. D.

Consulting Surgeons.

GEORGE B. DOANE, M. D. JOHN JEFFRIES, M. D. ABEL L.
PEIRSON, M. D. EDWARD REYNOLDS, M. D.

Officers of the Hospital.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD, M. D. *Superintendent.*

JACOB BIGELOW, M. D.

ENOCH HALE, M. D.

JOHN WARE, M. D.

} *Physicians.*

JOHN C. WARREN, M. D.

GEORGE HAYWARD, M. D.

SOLOMON D. TOWNSEND, M. D.

} *Surgeons.*

HENRY I. BOWDITCH, M. D. *Assistant Physician.*

HENRY J. BIGELOW, *House Physician.*

JOHN B. JOHNSON, *House Surgeon.*

CHARLES K. WHIPPLE, *Apothecary.*

Officers of the Mc Lean Asylum.

LUTHER V. BELL, M. D. *Physician and Superintendent.*

JOHN FOX, M. D. *House Apothecary.*

COLUMBUS TYLER, *Steward.*

Mrs. MARY E. TYLER, *Matron.*

HOMER GOODHUE, *Male Supervisor.*

MISS RELIEF R. BARBER, *Female Supervisor.*

VISITING COMMITTEES

FOR

1839-40.

March,	Messrs. APPLETON and LOWELL.
April,	“ LOWELL and AMORY.
May,	“ AMORY and DEXTER.
June,	“ DEXTER and BOWDITCH.
July,	“ BOWDITCH and BOND.
August,	“ BOND and LAMB.
September,	“ LAMB and SHAW.
October,	“ SHAW and BRIMMER.
November,	“ BRIMMER and ROGERS.
December,	“ ROGERS and HOOPER.
January,	“ HOOPER and EDWARDS.
February,	“ EDWARDS and APPLETON.